

CORPORATE
INVOLVEMENT
IN EDUCATION

AMERICA COUNTS PROGRAMS

math competence

“All students will master
challenging mathematics,
including the foundations of
algebra and geometry, by the
end of 8th grade.”

The Seven Priorities of the U.S. Department of Education

CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Maintaining America's position in an internationally competitive economy means that all students need to build strong skills in mathematics. Success in math is not only essential for college and the promising careers of this new century, but it is also critical for teaching ways of thinking that apply in every workplace worldwide. Yet, far too many students struggle with math and are not achieving to the desired levels that will spark success in higher education and beyond. In fact, on international math assessments, U.S. high school seniors scored among the lowest of the 21 participating nations, and were outperformed by nearly all of America's top economic competitors.

It is critical that America address this challenge today to ensure that tomorrow's graduates are academically prepared to guide the nation to continued prosperity.

By committing time and resources to improving math education, businesses can create substantial momentum to help students build world-class competencies that will lead to a highly skilled and well-educated workforce.

math

AMERICA COUNTS

One opportunity for corporate involvement is with America Counts, a multifaceted Department of Education initiative with six strategic goals that use federal resources to support improved student achievement in mathematics:

- Equip teachers to teach challenging mathematics through high-quality preparation and ongoing professional growth.
- Provide personal attention and additional learning time for students.
- Support high-quality research to inform best practices of mathematics teaching and learning.
- Build public understanding of the mathematics today's students must master.
- Encourage a challenging and engaging curriculum for all students based on rigorous standards.
- Promote the coordinated and effective use of federal, state, and local resources.

"A student who is not taught the potential, meaning, and magic of mathematics and science is a student who is denied the opportunity of broader learning and exploration, whose dreams go unfulfilled, and whose future success is limited."

U. S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

Examples of Businesses Supporting Mathematics Education

Math Initiatives

Businesses looking for ways to support high-quality math teaching and learning in their communities might also consider working on any of the initiatives below.

Figure This!: Math Challenges for Families

The goal of this initiative, jointly funded by the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation, is to encourage parents and other caregivers to become more involved in their children's mathematics learning. The Challenges provide fun and engaging examples of the world-class mathematics that students should be doing in middle school and they are available online at <http://www.figurethis.org>. Businesses can support this initiative by becoming a Figure This! corporate sponsor and assisting with the distribution of the Challenges through local newspapers, product packaging, other Web sites, public service advertising, and company newsletters.

Mathematics Tutoring and Mentoring

Businesses can establish or support a mathematics tutoring program that provides students with the personal attention and additional learning opportunities necessary for building strong mathematical understanding. Companies can allow employees to serve as tutors or mentors at neighboring schools or they can partner with local colleges and universities operating math tutoring and mentoring programs with Federal Work-Study dollars.

The National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century

This commission, chaired by former astronaut and Senator John Glenn, is creating an action strategy to improve the quality of instruction in K-12 math and science classrooms. Joining Senator Glenn is a diverse and talented group of 32 individuals chosen for their broad expertise and ability, including Craig Barrett, president and CEO of Intel Corporation, and Edward Rust, Jr., chairman and CEO of State Farm Insurance Company. You may access the online discussion forum at <http://www.ed.gov/americaaccounts/glenn/index.html> and provide feedback to assist the commission in its effort to improve math and science education.

America Counts Federal Work-Study (FWS)

Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, is piloting a new America Counts FWS program, entitled "Got Math?" that seeks innovative ways to involve local industry in helping young students overcome math anxiety and enjoy learning. Got Math? brings together FWS mentors and local elementary children in a year-long program that shows students the connections between school and applied mathematics through hands-on activities. With the corporate headquarters of GE Plastics located in Pittsfield, program coordinators consulted with local engineers to design a "math of plastics" module that allows students to measure, weigh, draw designs, and make their own plastic key chains. The segment culminates in a visit to Apex Engineering so students can witness firsthand how much the molding and manufacturing processes depend on precise mathematical calculations. In similarly designed modules, The Berkshire Museum engages students in a "math of nature" segment and the stationery division of Crane & Co. brings the "math of papermaking" to life.

Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education (IISME)

IISME, founded in 1985 by a consortium of San Francisco Bay Area companies and government laboratories in partnership with the Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California, Berkeley, established a summer fellowship program to provide teachers with mentored, paid summer jobs in applied mathematics, science, and technology. This program provides teachers with hands-on, cutting-edge professional development opportunities and enables them to develop an action plan for translating their summer experience into enriched classroom instruction for students.

Families Achieving the New Standards in Math, Science, and Technology Education (FANS)

Sponsored by the New Jersey Mathematics Coalition, the FANS Project is a statewide initiative to inform parents and other family members about the new standards in math, science, and technology and to encourage their involvement in helping children reach the new standards. The New Jersey Business and Industry Association and the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce have joined FANS as partners in a collaborative effort among education, business, government, and community leaders to disseminate information and materials and host workshops for parents throughout the state.

"Better Education Is Everybody's Business"

Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

If you are interested in learning how
your business can be more involved
with math education, please contact
the Corporate Outreach Office at
(202) 205-8599 or visit our Web
site: www.ed.gov/OIIA/OIA.



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